643 609 first go to the Mpfumo Counsellor, who now acts as an Agent General for his own tribe ; they are well received by him and fed while waiting for the day of the coronation.

643 701 When it is known that all the foreign military contingents have arrived,[1] then the Mpfumo army is also assembled and all together march to the capital. The royal family council, composed of uncles and the older relatives of the new chief, meets in a separate hut. The presiding member opens the proceedings as follows : "Si hi humeliliki : si hi humililiki, hi fanela ku beka hosi kutani! (See what has happened! This having happened to us we must install a new chief!)" The rest approve and reply according to etiquette. On an immense open space, all the warriors form a circle (biya mukhumbi). Battalion after battalion takes up its position within this living enclosure. An opening is 643 714 left in this otherwise perfect circle, and through it enters the bodyguard, composed of young men of the same age as the new chief, with the chief himself hidden in their midst, wearing his full military uniform and accoutrements : ostrich feathers on his head, strands of hair from cow's tails on his biceps and the calves of his legs, etc.

643 701 A specially appointed functionary, the bearer of the chiefs (mutlakuli wa tihosi), penetrates into the middle of the bodyguard and raises the young chief on his shoulders in the presence of the assembled armies. The great counsellors, the secondary chiefs, and all the young men of the royal family, then accompany the bearer of the king and with him march round the inner side of the circle of warriors, shouting as they go :

Hosi hi leyi ! Dlayan ! Dlayan !
Behold the chief ! Kill him ! Kill him !
A ku na yimbeni !
There is no other than he !
Hi tiba yuleyi.
We recognise none other.
Dlayan ! Lwa nga ni yimpi !
Kill him ! if there be any here who can raise an army (to oppose him).

To these shouts of defiance the several battalions reply consecutively as the procession passes them : "Bayete! Bayete! Ndjao!" These words form the royal salute, to which all the independent chiefs are entitled (1).

1 [for the coronation of a chief --Analyst]

175 177 726 703 These Zulus or Ngonis taught the tribes of the plain a system of war much more cruel than the old one : "kill everything," — such is the rule. No exception is made except in the case of women, who are taken prisoners. The Thonga clans readily accepted this new mode of fighting. They adopted the Zulu system wholesale, the proof of which is that all their military terminology is pure Zulu. Their apprenticeship began during the invasion ; the Ba-Ngoni seeing that the Thongas had a certain aptness for war, incorporated them into their own regiments and used to send them forward to the attack, as previously mentioned. They praised them by calling them the *Mabuyandlela* — those who prepare the way, — a kind of nickname which the Thongas have kept to this day and of which they were very proud.

721 175 703 However I do not think it would be unfair to the Thongas to assert that the old peaceful basis of their character is still preserved, notwithstanding this influence. We have had an opportunity of judging of their warlike capabilities during the war of 1894-1896 with the Portuguese. (See Appendix X, Short account of two South African wars.) The Natives did not fight from choice. While some of them gave proof of great endurance, and the army fought in some cases with a certain tenacity, Thongas and especially Ba-Ronga did not show themselves very able warriors. Want of discipline, mutual distrust, timidity resulting in frequent retreats, inability to follow up their successes, such were the main causes of their defeat. The wild soldiers of Maputju, who considered themselves the equals of the genuine Zulus, showed their courage only when there was no danger!

B. WAR COSTUME AND WEAPONS.

714 One day when we were comfortably seated under the beautiful tree at our station of Rikatla, a strange looking monster suddenly appeared on the scene, running towards us! The children fled and the women hid themselves... It was Charley, our milk-man, who, with some other warriors, was going to a military review, to be

214 held by his chief Mahazule. He approached us, a giant of 6 ft. in height, decked out in a costume which was certainly grotesque, but of which I at once caught the general idea ; he had evidently tried to resemble a wild animal and had succeeded admirably in the attempt. Such is most likely the origin of the war costume in mankind! As for Charley, he was thoroughly delighted to note the terrorising effect produced by his appearance on the youngsters and folk of weak nerves.

He was, admittedly, the handsomest warrior in our locality, and condescended on one occasion to allow us to photograph him, when he explained in detail the several component parts of his costume, which, as a whole, was certainly formidable! The photograph was a failure, but the get-up has remained imprinted on my memory.

714 825 To begin with the top ; the head was decorated with three plumes of long slender feathers, taken from a bird called *sakabonyi*, the widow bird, which is only to be found in the mountains ; sometimes the feathers of other birds are added (magalu, mafukwana); one of these plumes is worn in the centre, the others one on each side, and all three are fixed on to a conical helmet (shintlontlo) trimmed with ostrich feathers. This helmet is set on a kind of toque of another skin, which is held in place by a chin-strap. This style of head gear makes the head look about twice the natural size, and, to give it a still more ferocious appearance, it is adorned here and there with porcupine quills.

714 301 825 Round his neck Charley wore a necklace of plaited thongs of black calf skin (tinkocho). Armlets of long white ox hairs, carefully selected from the tail, ornamented his biceps, and garters of a similar make were on the calves of his legs.

The belt around his loins was very rich, the beautiful skin of a civet cat (nsimba), with its fine yellow stripes, hanging down in front to the middle of his thighs, and small antelopes' skins behind (madjobo ya nhlengane). Finally, to complete the wild animal appearance, calves and ankles were covered with bracelets of large black seeds, which come from the North (timbavu), each seed being as large as a cherry. The size of the legs is thus considerably increased and conveys the idea of a pachyderm ; when he jumped

714 heavily or stamped his feet on the ground, it sounded like the tread of an elephant.

714 This costume is a warm one, and the warrior carries a sort of
321 bone curry-comb, made of the rib of an ox, shaped and sharpened,
302 which he uses to scrape the perspiration from his face and body, when taking violent exercice or indulging in the dances descriptive of his prowess. Such is the native pocket-handkerchief!

714 The several component parts of the war-dress are kept in a little hut raised on poles, near the owner's dwelling, and are carefully looked after, being frequently dusted and exposed to the sun to preserve them from moths and weevils. A complete uniform is worth several pounds sterling!

713 *Arms* among the Ba-Ronga are of a very primitive kind, those
411 of most ancient date being doubtless the *club* (nhonga) and the *knobkerrie* (gungwe) (1) of which two specimens are given in the accompanying illustration (No. 4). The Native never journeys without his stick, using it to kill snakes, should any cross his path, and should fortune smile on him, to knock over any quail that may rise at his feet. In quarrels or in war time this *nhonga* can be a dangerous weapon. The stick with the fluted head comes, I am told, from Bilen, and it seems that this style is in great favour in Gaza. It may have a phallic significance.

But the most formidable weapon of the South African Black is the *assagai* (tlhari, fumo (No. 2), of which there are two kinds ; the larger (likhalo) consisting of a sharp, pointed, double edged steel blade, fixed on to a stick with iron or brass wire, and the smaller (tindjombi) with a blade of the size of our arrow-head, fastened to the handle with strips of bark or of palm leaves. The former is for hand-to-hand combat, and the warrior never releases his hold of it, while the latter—of which three or four may be held in the hand when entering the fight—are thrown at the enemy from a distance (2). The length of the large assagai on the right of the illustration is as follows : Blade 14 inches ; binding of iron

797 (1) These sticks were given to me as dentistry fees for the extraction of decayed
713 teeth !

(2) I once had an opportunity to observe the effects of the assagai. A young evangelist of our Mission was surprised on the railway line by some Zihlahla warriors

713 of palm leaves 5 in. and handle 35 ½ inches. As previously
411 mentioned, the handle of the large sized assagai is broken at the
595 warriors' death, being "he," or his defilement; but the blade
643 "never dies." It belongs to the chief, as does also the shield, and the son will inherit it. During the warrior's life, it is kept in the hut of his *first wife*. She is called the owner (nwinyi) of the assagai. It is taboo for the other wives to touch it; another fact which shows the special position of the first wife. (Comp. p. 284.)

713 Another weapon in more restricted use and which can also
411 be employed for cutting wood, is the *axe* or *hatchet*, of which I
439 have met with two descriptions (No. 3); the blade (mbimbi) may be narrow and elongated—it is then called shingwatane,—or broad and rounded,—when it is the shiyema. These hatchets are firmly inserted in their wooden handles like the axes of the lake-dwellers. European manufacturers now export a considerable number of semicircular hatchets, similar to the one on the right in my illustration, to Delagoa. The one here portrayed will be at once recognised as being of Native make. I may also mention the big *knives* (mikwa), a sort of sword; one sometimes meets brawny fellows walking along the paths, armed with these dangerous looking implements! However they are quite inoffensive.

713 I managed to obtain from a traveller a beautiful *dagger* which
411 he was carrying slung across his breast; it is a rare specimen
171 and comes, I am told, from the Ba-Ndjao tribe (No. 5). The sheath is made of two pieces of wood, artistically carved and fastened together with a plait of iron wire; it is slightly hollowed out to allow the blade to enter; this is firmly fixed in the handle through which it passes from end to end, coming out at the extremity, where it is bent back and thus held tightly in place. The Ba-Pedi in the Zoutpansberg also make similar knives.

714 Finally, when the warrior holds in one hand his large assagai,
171 in the other will be found his *shield* (shitlhangu) (No. 1), which he grasps by the stick around which this piece of defensive armour pivots. The Thonga shield is made like that of the Zulus, of a piece of ox-hide, oval in shape and of varying size, sometimes all of one colour and sometimes variegated. (The several battalions

714 in the Chaka army were distinguished by differently coloured shields.) On either side of the central line, from top to bottom, two parallel rows of small square incisions are made (magabela) through which are run strips of hide of a different colour, the effect being a series of oblongs. By an ingenious device the ends of these strips are so tied at the back of the shield as to form several sheath-like nooses into which is inserted the stick by which it is held. The space between the two lines of oblongs is called the back (nhlana) of the shield. The nooses or sheaths are four or six in number : two or three at the top, and two or three at the bottom, a space being left in the middle, where the warrior grasps the stick. This stick tends to strengthen the shield, but, being merely passed through the nooses, it acts also as a pivot around which it can turn ; it is this pivoting action which gives to the shield its chief value as a protection. An assagai (usually thrown with considerable strength) would easily penetrate the ox-hide, but when it strikes the shield, the force of the impact causes it to pivot and the weapon is deflected to one side: should it strike exactly in the middle, it would hit the stick, break it and lose all further impetus. It is hardly necessary to add that the *shitlhangu* of the South African Black is absolutely useless when opposed to bullets ; it was invented to protect the warrior against the dreaded assagai, at a time when firearms were not yet thought of!

713 177 During the last century the Ba-Ronga have begun to use guns for hunting and also for war. Although the sale of firearms to the Natives has often been prohibited, the Ba-Ronga were reported to possess several hundreds of rifles at the commencement of the 1894 war, and also to be fairly proficient in their use... very different from the Madagascans, who removed the sights from their rifles on the score that they were in the way when taking aim!

C. THE MOBILISATION OF THE ARMY.

202 726 643 In the Zihlahla country, when the chief wished to muster his forces, he did so by means of the *shipalapala*, the rudimentary trumpet which I described in the preceding chapter. A swift